

Hanson cassettes sell for Mmm...Mmm...\$180

In 1994, Tulsa, Okla., brothers 14-year-old Isaac, 11-year-old Taylor, and 9-year-old Zachary Hanson cut a demo in a Nashville recording studio. They called the release of their pop music *Boomerang* and sold it at local concerts and record stores. A year later the brothers put together another release back home in Tulsa at David Teegarden's (Teegarden and VanWinkle, Bob Seger's Silver Bullet Band) Natura Studio, titled *MmmBop* and again made it available only locally, where they had been playing small venues but gaining a loyal, mostly teenage, female following. The trio caught the attention of a major record label and went on to have a catchy platinum-selling single, Grammy® Award nominations and world tours. Somewhere in the excitement, Hanson's original homemade demos, purchased by early fans, became sought-after. A rumor started that the record company bought what was left and destroyed them. For many collectors, getting their hands on these almost mythical releases was becoming a full-time occupation.

"I have been looking for these cassettes for years," said Heather Silva, of Kissimmee, Fla. The 20-year-old has been a fan since the age of 12 and has already acquired an extensive Hanson collection. "I have a closet full of Hanson stuff. I think at last count I had 63 compact discs, 23 shirts, 800 pin-ups, 17 videos, 40 books and an autograph, which means the most to me."

Twenty-seven-year-old Melissa

Boughton of Whitehall, Mich., shares the same goal. While her own Hanson collection was already bursting at the seams, she admitted it wasn't complete without the first two ever-known Hanson recordings. "I have over 85 Hanson CDs and CD singles from all over the world. I have every poster and T-shirt they ever produced, plus all of the promotional materials from all of the tours and albums," she admitted.

Persistence finally paid off earlier this year when the two finally found the cassettes on eBay, and, for both, money was no object.

"I have been looking for this cassette since 1997 — I would have gone as high as \$500 for it," said Boughton, who bought her copy of *Boomerang* for "a bargain," at \$180. "I freaked out when I saw it," said Silva, who ended up also paying \$180 for a copy of *MmmBop* with a little help from her supportive family. "I had to beg my dad for it. He was the one who had to bid on it for me, so I could win it."

Boomerang consists of nine songs, including five original compositions. The brothers used studio musicians to accompany them on the recording. However, for their second effort, *MmmBop*, they performed their 15 original songs, playing their own instruments. Both were released on cassette and CD, with a limited run of 1,000 copies for each format, although collectors contend that there were fewer cassettes made. The compact discs have sold for anywhere from \$200-1,000.

"It will be the centerpiece for my collection," said Boughton. "I'm



going to put this in a shadow box frame, after I have it autographed."

Although Hanson haven't lately had the chart success of their first commercial release and one brother has since married and now has two children, that doesn't curb the enthusiasm and loyalty of their following. Tickets for the group's summer tour have re-sold on eBay for more than \$200 apiece, and back issues of their fanzine, *MOE*, have seen prices upward of \$50 each.

With her prized cassette securely home with the rest of her collection, Boughton is back on the hunt for yet-another elusive treasure. "I am still searching for a CD display from *This Time Around* (the group's 2000 release). I have never seen it on eBay. I think they were all destroyed at music stores."

— Lisa Wheeler